

# **Qualitative Case Review**

## **Western Region**

**Fiscal Year 2006**

### ***Preliminary Results***

**Office of Services Review**

**September 2005**

## Methodology

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The Qualitative Case Review in the Western Region was held the week of September 19-23, 2005. Twenty-four DCFS cases in the Western Region were reviewed by certified reviewers from the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG), the Office of Services Review (OSR), and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Reviewers from DCFS and outside stakeholders also participated with the certified reviewers. The cases were selected by CWPPG based on a sampling matrix assuring that a representative group of children was reviewed. The sample included children in out-of-home care and families receiving in-home services, such as voluntary and protective supervision and intensive family preservation. Cases were selected to include offices throughout the region.

Information was obtained through thorough interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (when placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. Additionally the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

## Executive Summary

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OSR conducts an analysis of each region's data in order to determine strengths and identify opportunities to improve performance. OSR believes the three most important findings from this review are:

- 1) Data on Child and Family Assessment and Long-term View shows that every office needs improvement in these indicators. No office had more than 50% of their cases pass both of these indicators. To improve scores next year, a region-wide response is necessary.
- 2) For the seventh consecutive year, in-home cases did not perform as well as foster care cases. In-home cases were largely responsible for the unacceptable scores on the core indicators as well as the overall System Performance.
- 3) There was no significant difference between the cases selected for review this year and those selected last year. The sample this year showed no significant difference in caseloads or worker experience, more cases that had been open for over a year, fewer cases of teenagers and fewer in-home cases; all of which would presumably make this year's sample more favorable than last year's sample.

## Summary of Performance

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- Whereas there were 24 cases scored on System Performance this year, last year there were only 22 cases scored on System Performance. This difference in the sample size created some distortion in the percentages reported; increases were actually greater than they appear and decreases were less dramatic than they appear. For example, there were two more cases that passed overall System Performance this year than there were last year (19 versus 17), which would normally result in an 8 point increase (from 71% to 79%), but due to the higher number of cases reviewed this year the percentage increased only slightly (from 77% to 79%).
- The overall Child Status score was 92%, an improvement of 4 points over last year. This easily exceeds the exit criteria of 85%.
- Safety, Appropriateness of Placement, Health/Physical Well-being, Emotional/Behavioral Well-being, Learning Progress, Caregiver Functioning, and Satisfaction showed excellent results; all scored at or above 85%.
- Prospects for Permanence fell from 73% to 58%, Stability fell from 86% to 75%, and Family Resourcefulness fell from 85% to 58%. All three of these indicators had shown double digit increases last year.
- Six system indicators improved while five declined. The six indicators that improved were Team Coordination, Plan Implementation, Tracking and Adaptation, Child and Family Participation, Formal/Informal Supports, and Successful Transitions.
- Three core indicators exceeded the exit criteria: Team Coordination (75%), Plan Implementation (92%), and Tracking and Adaptation (79%).
- Of the 24 caseworkers reviewed, five were new workers with less than 12 months work experience. Twenty-one percent of the workers in the sample this year were new workers whereas in the past two years only 8% of the workers were new.

## Performance Tables

### Preliminary Data

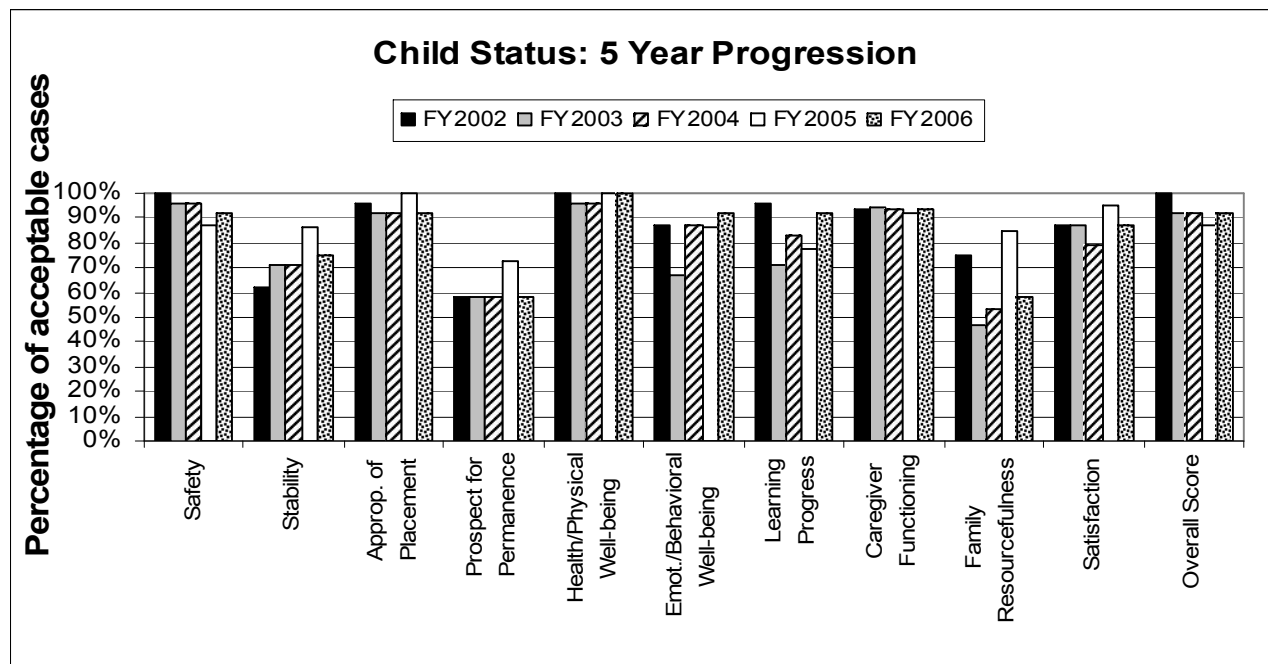
The results in the following tables are based on the scores after all stories had been submitted. They contain the scores of all 24 cases. The following table includes results from the past five fiscal years.

Western Child Status	# of cases	# of cases		FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
	(+)	(-)	Exit Criteria 85% on overall score					Current Scores
Safety	22	2	91.7%	100%	96%	96%	88%	92%
Stability	18	6	75.0%	63%	71%	71%	86%	75%
Approp. of Placement	22	2	91.7%	96%	92%	92%	100%	92%
Prospect for Permanence	14	10	58.3%	58%	58%	58%	73%	58%
Health/Physical Well-being	24	0	100%	100%	96%	96%	100%	100%
Emot./Behavioral Well-being	22	2	91.7%	88%	67%	88%	86%	92%
Learning Progress	22	2	91.7%	96%	71%	83%	77%	92%
Caregiver Functioning	15	1	93.8%	93%	94%	93%	92%	94%
Family Resourcefulness	7	5	58.3%	75%	47%	53%	85%	58%
Satisfaction	21	3	87.5%	88%	88%	79%	95%	88%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>91.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>92%</b>

(+) cases acceptable (-) cases needing improvement

*Note: These scores are preliminary and subject to change.*

1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable Child Status score. It is not an average of FY06 current scores.



**Statistical Analysis of Child Status Results:**

**The overall Child Status score was 92% with only two out of 24 cases not reaching an acceptable level. This exceeds the exit criteria of 85% and is a very positive result. Both of the unacceptable cases received unacceptable scores on Safety.**

Four of the ten Child Status indicators showed improvement. There were modest increases in Safety (up 4 points), Emotional/Behavioral Well-being (up 6 points), and Caregiver Functioning (up 2 points). There was a remarkable 15 point increase in Learning Progress (from 77% to 92%). Health/Physical Well-being maintained the 100% level that was achieved last year.

Indicators that scored at or above 85% included: Safety (92%), Appropriateness of Placement (92%), Health/Physical Well-being (100%), Emotional/Behavioral Well-being (92%), Learning Progress (92%), Caregiver Functioning (94%), and Satisfaction (88%).

There were three indicators that showed remarkable double-digit improvement last year, but they fell back to their former levels this year. These were Stability (from 71% to 86%, then back to 75%), Prospects for Permanence (from 58% to 73%, then back to 58%) and Family Resourcefulness (from 53% to 85%, then back to 58%).

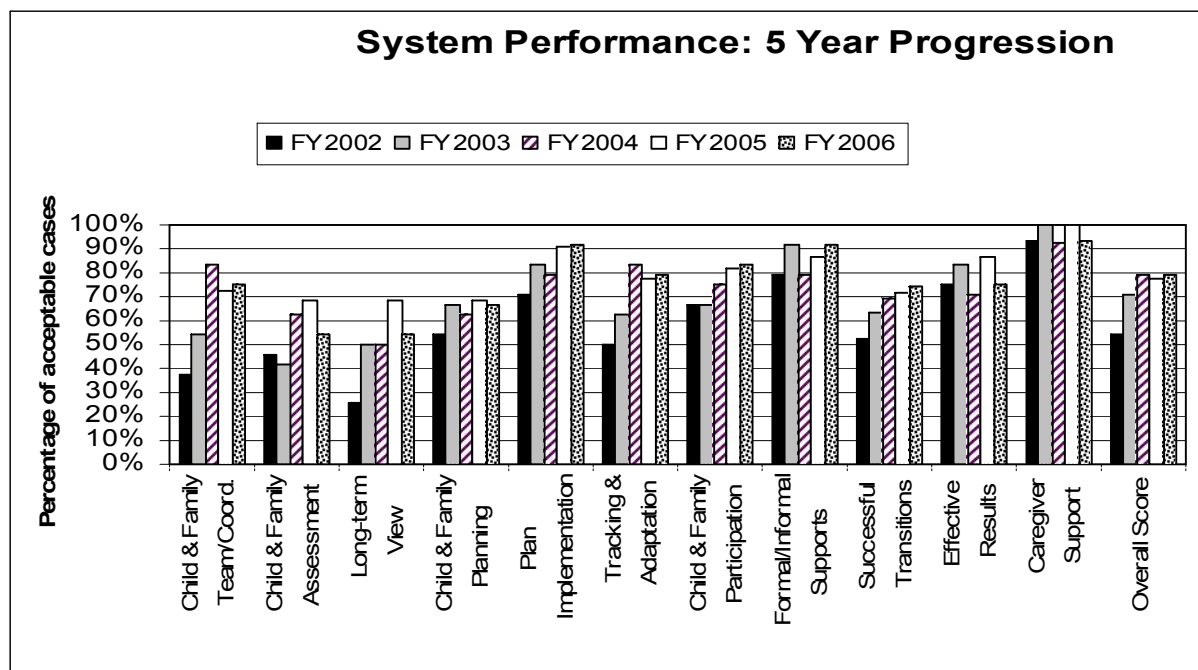
The overall Child Status score was slightly higher this year than last year, rising from 88% to 92%.

Western System Performance								
	# of cases	# of cases		FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
	(+)	(-)	Exit Criteria 70% on <b>Shaded</b> indicators					<b>Current</b>
			Exit Criteria 85% on overall score					<b>Scores</b>
Child & Family Team/Coord.	18	6	75.0%	38%	54%	83%	73%	75%
Child & Family Assessment	13	11	54.2%	46%	42%	63%	68%	54%
Long-term View	13	11	54.2%	26%	50%	50%	68%	54%
Child & Family Planning	16	8	66.7%	54%	67%	63%	68%	67%
Plan Implementation	22	2	91.7%	71%	83%	79%	91%	92%
Tracking & Adaptation	19	5	79.2%	50%	63%	83%	77%	79%
Child & Family Participation	20	4	83.3%	67%	67%	75%	82%	83%
Formal/Informal Supports	22	2	91.7%	79%	92%	79%	86%	92%
Successful Transitions	17	6	73.9%	52%	64%	70%	71%	74%
Effective Results	18	6	75.0%	75%	83%	71%	86%	75%
Caregiver Support	15	1	93.8%	93%	100%	92%	100%	94%
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>79%</b>
			0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%					

(+) cases acceptable (-) cases needing improvement

*Note: These scores are preliminary and subject to change.*

- 1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable System Performance score. It is not an average of FY06 current scores.



### **Statistical Analysis of System Performance Results:**

**The overall score for System Performance was nearly identical to last year, rising from 77% to 79%. Nineteen of the 24 cases scored had acceptable System Performance. This was two more cases than last year that had acceptable overall System Performance, which would normally have resulted in an 8% increase, but because there were only 22 cases scored on System Performance last year the percentage doesn't fully reflect this achievement.**

Six system indicators improved from last year. There were modest increases in Team Coordination (from 73% to 75%), Child and Family Planning (from 68% to 71%), Plan Implementation (from 91% to 92%), Tracking and Adaptation (from 77% to 79%), Child and Family Participation (from 82% to 83%), Formal and Informal Supports (from 86% to 92%), and Successful Transitions (from 71% to 74%).

The same three core indicators exceeded the exit criteria this year as last year (Plan Implementation, Tracking and Adaptation, and Child and Family Team Coordination). Three of the core indicators showed decreases; Functional Assessment and Long Term View both dropped from 68% to 54% and Child and Family Planning decreased by one point. Again, there is an aberration in these percentages. If all cases had been scored last year there would most likely have been nine cases that did not pass Functional Assessment or Long-term View (63%), and the decrease in these figures this year would not appear as great as it now appears.

The highest scoring system indicators were Caregiver Support (94%), Plan Implementation (92%), and Formal/Informal Supports (92%).



## ANALYSIS OF DATA: What is the data telling us?

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### 1) ANALYSIS OF CHILD AND FAMILY ASSESSMENT AND LONG-TERM VIEW

Given the unexpected decreases in both Child and Family Assessment and Long-term View, OSR did additional analysis of the cases that had unacceptable scores on either or both of these indicators. There were eight cases that had unacceptable scores on both Child and Family Assessment and Long-term View, three cases that had unacceptable scores on Child and Family Assessment with acceptable scores on Long-term View, and three cases that had unacceptable scores on Long-term View with acceptable scores on Child and Family Assessment for a total of 14 cases. Only five of the 14 cases had unacceptable overall System Performance.

#### By Office:

The following table illustrates the results of examining how each office performed with respect to these two indicators. No office had more than 50% of its cases with acceptable scores on both Functional Assessment and Long-term View, indicating that the challenge with these two indicators is region-wide.

Office	Total cases reviewed	Total Cases Acceptable for both Child and Family Assessment and LTV	% Acceptable
Office A	3	0	0%
Office B	1	0	0%
Office C	2	1	50%
Office D	2	1	50%
Office E	12	6	50%
Office F	4	2	50%

#### By Months the Case is Open:

Months Open	# in sample	# Acceptable	% Acceptable
0-6 mos.	3	1	33%
7-12 mos.	7	2	29%
13+ mos.	14	7	50%

OSR explored whether cases that had been open for just a few months had a negative effect on the results for these indicators. Contrary to what is often assumed, cases that were open for less than six months did not score lower than other cases; in fact they scored slightly better than those that had been open seven to 12 months.

## 2) ANALYSIS OF FOSTER CARE CASES VERSUS IN-HOME CASES

For the seventh consecutive year, foster care cases scored higher than in-home cases in Western Region. This year the percentage of foster care cases with acceptable System Performance rose to 92% while the percentage of in-home cases with acceptable System Performance remained at 67%. In Western region, foster care cases have consistently scored better than in-home cases on both Child Status and System Performance. Four of the five cases that had unacceptable overall System Performance this year were in-home cases.

Year	# foster care cases in sample	# in-home cases in sample	% of foster cases with acceptable child status	% of in-home cases with acceptable child status	% of foster cases with acceptable system performance	% of in-home cases with acceptable system performance
2000	8	14	63%	43%	50%	21%
2001	12	11	83%	82%	50%	36%
2002	13	11	100%	100%	62%	45%
2003	15	9	100%	78%	87%	56%
2004	14	10	100%	80%	93%	60%
2005	13	9	93%	80%	85%	67%
2006	12	12	100%	83%	92%	67%

The following table illustrates how foster care and in-home cases scored on System Performance in other regions and statewide for FY05. Most of the other regions scored the same or better on in-home cases than they did on foster care cases. In the one region that did score better on foster care cases, there was not nearly the difference between the scores that there was in Western Region. The dramatic difference seen on in-home cases in Western region is unique to that region.

Region	%Acceptable Foster Care	%Acceptable In-home
Eastern	94%	86%
Salt Lake	81%	87%
Southwest	100%	100%
Northern	77%	91%
Statewide	85%	87%

Just as foster care cases performed better than in-home cases on overall System Performance, they also scored better on Child and Family Assessment and Long-term View. The following table shows the percentage of cases that scored acceptable on both of these indicators for each case type. In-home cases were much more likely to have unacceptable scores on Child and Family Assessment and/or Long Term View, just as they were more likely to have unacceptable overall System Performance. PSS cases had a devastating effect on these two indicators, with only two of 11 cases receiving acceptable scores on both indicators.

<b>Case Type</b>	<b># In Sample</b>	<b>#Acceptable</b>	<b>% Acceptable</b>
PSC	1	0	0%
PSS	11	2	18%
SCF	12	8	67%

Having an in-home case with an inexperienced worker appeared to be a disastrous combination. The following table shows the results when looking at both case type and worker experience. Four of the five cases that had unacceptable overall System Performance were in-home cases, and they had workers with only ten to fifteen months of experience.

<b>Case Number</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Worker Experience In Months</b>	<b>Case Type</b>	<b>System Performance</b>
	Office A	180	Foster Care	Unacceptable
	Office A	15	In-home	Unacceptable
	Office E	10	In-home	Unacceptable
	Office C	10	In-home	Unacceptable
	Office F	11	In-home	Unacceptable

### 3) ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE SCORING

There are several demographic factors that OSR traditionally examines to see if they are having an impact on how cases are scoring. These factors are a) caseload; b) number of months the cases was open; c) worker experience; d) age of the child and e) the offices from which the cases were selected. These factors were particularly important this year because some individuals from the region thought the sample may have varied significantly this year from last year, and that over sampling on some of these factors may have negatively affected the results. High caseload, cases that have been open a short period of time, new workers, teenage children, and/or over sampling of particular offices that have struggled in the past were all suspected of negatively impacting the results. The region requested that OSR examine these factors to see if the sample made it more difficult to achieve acceptable scores. OSR first analyzed the data on each of these factors to see if the factor was affecting outcomes, then looked at whether or not the sample was significantly different this year than last year for any of these factors.

#### a) Caseload

High caseload did not impact on the results. Of the caseworkers with a “manageable” caseload (16 open cases or less), 78% scored acceptable on System Performance while 83% of workers with a large caseload (17 or more open cases) had an acceptable score. In this review six workers had caseloads of 17 or more cases, slightly more than last year when only four workers had high caseloads.

<b>Caseload Size: # of open cases</b>	<b>Total # of caseworkers scored</b>	<b>Scored acceptable on System Performance</b>
16 open cases or less	18	14 (78%)
17 open cases or more	6	5 (83%)

## **b) Number of Months the Case was Open**

OSR looked at the length of time the cases had been open to see if cases that had not been open very long were scoring unacceptable on overall System Performance more frequently than those that had been open longer. As the chart below illustrates, only three of the cases pulled for review had been open for less than six months, and only one of those scored unacceptable on System Performance. Cases that were open 7-12 months actually scored the lowest, but this is probably because a high proportion of the cases open 7-12 months were in-home cases (5 out of 7, or 71%).

<b>Number of months case was open 2006 Western Sample</b>	<b># in sample</b>	<b># Acceptable System Performance</b>	<b>% Acceptable System Performance</b>
3-6 months	3	2	67%
7-12 months	7	4	57%
13 months or more	14	13	93%

Also, the statewide data from last year shows that cases that were open for less than 6 months scored as well or better than cases that were open for longer periods of time.

<b>Number of months case was open 2005 Statewide</b>	<b># in sample</b>	<b># Acceptable System Performance</b>	<b>% Acceptable System Performance</b>
0-6 months	18	17	94%
7-12 months	61	55	90%
13 months or more	86	70	81%

### c) Worker Experience

Only five of the 24 cases had workers were inexperienced (less than a year of experience), but only two of the five had acceptable System Performance on their cases (40%). Workers with more than a year of experience had acceptable System Performance on 89% of their cases. It should be noted that all of these workers had 10 to 12 months experience; they were not brand new workers, so worker experience may not have been as big a factor as the numbers would indicate. Also, three of the five cases were in-home cases, and that may have affected the scores more than the worker's inexperience did. In this review there were 12 workers with less than three years experience, seven workers with four to 10 years of experience, and five workers with 11 or more years of experience.

Number of months employed	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
0-12 months	5	2	40%
13 months or more	19	17	89%

### d) Age of Child

The cases of teenagers are often assumed to be more difficult and less likely to have acceptable System Performance than cases of children age 12 and younger. In this review the cases of teenagers actually performed better (89%) than the cases of children age 12 and younger (73%). Of the five cases that had unacceptable overall System Performance, one was a teenager and four were age 6 to 12.

Age	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
0-5 years	2	2	100%
6-12 years	13	9	69%
0-12 years	15	11	73%
13 years or more	9	8	89%

### e) Offices and Supervisors

The cases with unacceptable System Performance were distributed fairly evenly across both offices and supervisors. The five cases with unacceptable System Performance came from five different supervisors and four different offices (see table in Appendix).

## **COMPARISON OF THIS YEAR'S SAMPLE TO LAST YEAR'S SAMPLE**

At the request of the region, OSR did a comparison of this year's sample to last year's sample. The sampling methodology used by CWG results in a sample that represents and reflects the total population of cases that were open in the region at the time the sample was selected. Therefore, in order for there to have been a significant difference in the sample from last year to this year, there would have to have been a significant change in the population that the sample represents. It does not appear that this was the case.

OSR compared the case type, number of cases pulled from each office, permanency goals, number of months the case was open, age of the target child, caseload, and worker experience in this year's sample versus last year's sample. As the chart below indicates, there were no significant differences in any of these variables.

Additionally, it is generally assumed that cases of teenagers and cases that have not been open very long are "harder" cases that are less likely to score acceptable. The FY06 sample had fewer cases with teenagers and more cases that had been open for over a year than last year's sample had. It would appear that this year's sample was actually more favorable to acceptable outcomes than last year's sample was.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>
<b>CASE TYPE</b>		
Foster Care Cases	14	12
PSC	1	1
PSS	9	11
<b>OFFICES</b>		
American Fork	6	3
Delta	0	1
Fillmore	1	0
Heber City	1	2
Nephi	1	0
Orem	0	2
Provo	9	12
Spanish Fork	6	4
<b>PERMANENCY GOALS</b>		
Adoption Goal	3	3
Guardianship Goal	2	3
Ind. Living	1	0
Ind. Permanence	3	5
Remain Home	8	8
Reunification	7	5
<b>MONTHS OPEN</b>		
0-6 mos.	4	3
7-12 mos.	8	7

13+ mos.	12	14
<b>AGE OF TARGET CHILD</b>		
0 to 5	4	2
6 to 12	9	13
13+	11	9
<b>CASELOAD</b>		
16 or less	20	18
17 or more	4	6
<b>WORKER EXPERIENCE</b>		
0-12 mos.	2	5
13+ mos.	22	19

## **OTHER ANALYSIS**

### **Kinship Cases**

The region also requested that OSR do an analysis of cases where the children were in kinship placements. We found that of the five total cases that were unacceptable for System Performance, two were kinship placements. We did further analysis of the two kinship cases that were unacceptable on System Performance.

- Both of the cases were open 7-12 months, so it wasn't that they were new cases.
- In both cases the assigned worker's caseload was less than 16, so caseload wasn't a factor.
- The length of employment for the caseworker may have been a factor. Both of the workers had been employed 10 months. This in tandem with the fact that for all 24 cases, only 40% of the new worker cases were acceptable seems to point to this as an issue. However, both workers were just two months shy of being considered experienced workers (workers with 12 months experience or more).
- In some analyses, we find that teenagers are more likely to score unacceptable. That was not the case here. In both of these cases, the child was less than 12 years old, so it wasn't that they were teenagers.
- The case type may have been a factor. Both cases were PSS. This is supported by the fact that when looking at all PSS cases, only 73% were acceptable, whereas 92% of all Foster Care cases were acceptable.
- Both cases had unacceptable scores on Permanence, Teaming, Functional Assessment, Long-term View, Planning, and Tracking and Adaptation.

### **Cases that have Unacceptable Overall System Performance**

Finally, OSR examined the effect that the five cases that had unacceptable overall System Performance had on the region's scores. These five cases accounted for anywhere from 45% to 100% of all of the unacceptable scores on the core indicators. This illustrates the devastating effect that a handful of cases can have on the core indicators and overall System Performance. As the region strives to meet the exit criteria,



it is critical that each worker understands the effect that their one case can have on overall performance. It will require a region-wide commitment from every worker, supervisor, and administrator to achieve the level of performance necessary to meet the exit criteria.

	Team Coordination	Child and Family Assessment	Long Term View	Planning Process	Plan Implementation	Tracking and Adaptation
# Acceptable	18	13	13	17	22	19
# Unacceptable	6	11	11	7	2	5
# Unacceptable from the five cases	5	5	5	4	2	5
% Unacceptable from the five cases	83%	45%	45%	57%	100%	100%

\* Of the five cases that were unacceptable on System Performance, four were home-base cases, four of the five had workers who had been employed 10-15 months, two of the five were kinship placements, one had a high caseload (17), and one was open less than six months. The one foster care case among these five cases had an experienced worker and the child was placed in a foster home.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary there are three points that OSR wishes to emphasize.

- 1) The Child and Family Assessment and Long-term View indicators are challenging workers in every office across the region. The opportunities for improvement are region-wide.
- 2) Western Region has a unique challenge with its in-home cases. These cases have scored significantly lower than foster care cases for the past seven years. This is not the case in other regions; in-home cases generally score as well or better than foster care cases in the other regions.
- 3) There was nothing significantly different about this year's sample that made it more difficult to achieve acceptable scores this year than it was last year. In fact, it appears that the sample this year was actually more favorable than last year's sample.

OSR reiterates the offer made at the Exit Conference, namely, that they would be happy to do further analysis through intensive interviews and evaluations with region staff to attempt to identify underlying causes for the challenges that this review identified.

# APPENDIX

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE				
OFFICE	# Cases	# Acceptable	% Acceptable	Avg. Sys. Performance
Office A	3	2	67%	3.7
Office B	1	1	100%	4
Office C	2	1	50%	4
Office D	2	2	100%	4.5
Office E	12	10	83%	4.7
Office F	4	3	75%	4.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	24	19	<b>79%</b>	4.4

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE					
Supervisor		# Cases	# Acceptable	% Acceptable	Avg. Sys. Perf
A		1	1	100%	4.0
B		2	1	50%	4.0
C		1	1	100%	6.0
D		1	0	0%	3.0
E		1	1	100%	4.0
F		2	2	100%	4.5
G		2	2	100%	4.5
H		1	1	100%	5
I		3	3	100%	4.7
J		1	1	100%	4
K		2	1	50%	3.5
L		2	1	50%	4
M		1	0	0%	3.0
N		4	4	100%	5.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		24	19	<b>79%</b>	4.4